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REMARKS

Claims 1-17 remain pending in the application. Claims 15 and 17 have been amended without introduction of new matter. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

The courtesy extended to Applicant's representative in a telephonic interview conducted on January 19, 2005 is noted with appreciation. The Examiner had initiated the interview in order to offer the Applicant an opportunity to gain immediate allowance of the application in exchange for cancellation of claims 15-16. In response, Applicant's representative expressed a desire to more thoroughly study the Examiner's basis for considering claims 15-16 to be unpatentable. Consequently, it was agreed that a new Office Action should be issued.

The allowance of claims 1-14 and the indication that claim 17 defines allowable subject matter is gratefully acknowledged. In response, claim 17 has been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In making this revision, Applicant has now noted that, in the final paragraph, the term "the failed data block" lacks antecedent basis. This has also been corrected by canceling the word "failed" from this phrase. This change is not believed to affect the patentability of this claim. Accordingly, claim 17 is now believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claim 15 stands rejected under 35 USC §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Antia et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,347,124). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As now amended, claim 15 defines a method of compressing data blocks within the receiver of a communication system, which method comprises, *inter alia*, "storing the scale factor and a representation of each soft value within the data block in memory, the representation indicating only a sign of each soft value within the received data block." (Emphasis added.) With this amendment, claim 15 now very clearly defines that in addition to the scale factor, only the sign of each soft value within the received data block is relevant to carrying out the compression algorithm.

The Antia et al. patent fails to anticipate the subject matter defined by claim 15 at least because it fails to disclose or suggest the feature set forth above. Instead, Antia et al. disclose a compression technique in which, in addition to the scale factor, soft decision bits are generated that convey not only sign information, but also magnitude information. This is apparent in the Antia et al. patent at, for example, column 5, lines 1-14, where Equation 3

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mathematically defines how the compressed soft decision bits representing the signal bits are to be generated. Equation 3 shows that the soft decision bits can take on any of eight values as a function of how large the signal bits are relative to the scale factors. Furthermore, in the Abstract section, Antia et al. expressly state that "the soft decision bits are generated using a quantization *having at least two bits.*" (Emphasis added.) Thus, quantization to more than just sign information is a requirement in Antia et al.

Antia et al.'s express statement about the required minimum level of quantization teaches away from representing each individual soft value by only its sign, and is hard evidence that one of ordinary skill in the art would not even have been motivated to modify the teachings of the Antia et al. patent to derive the subject matter defined by claim 15.

In view of the foregoing, claim 15 is believed to be patentably distinguishable over the Antia et al. patent. It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejection of this claim under 35 USC §102(e) be withdrawn.

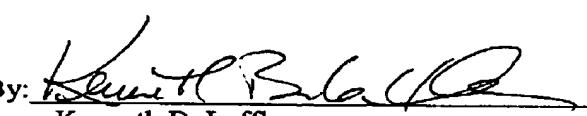
Claim 16 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Antia et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 16 depends from claim 15, and is therefore patentably distinguishable over Antia et al. for at least the same reasons as those set forth above. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claim 16 under 35 USC §103(a) be withdrawn.

The application is believed to be in condition for allowance. Prompt notice of same is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
Potomac Patent Group PLLC

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By: 
Kenneth B. Leffler
Registration No. 36,075

P.O. Box 855
McLean, Virginia 22101-0855
703-718-8884

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Kenneth B. Leffler